

Sports

Dan O'Meara editor/591-2312

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Raiders eye return visit to state meet

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

North Farmington coach Jeff Dwyer is cautioning his gymnasts about the possibility of the unknown and unexpected Saturday at the Grasse Pointe South regional meet.

From Dwyer's standpoint, it would be wrong to consider the Raiders shoo-ins to finish among the top three teams and thereby qualify for state competition on March 18.

Looking at the list of teams feeding the GPS regional, it appears the meet should be a dual between No. 1-ranked Troy Athens and North, champion of the Western Lakes Activities Association.

"Just like Northville and John Glenn really scared us at our league meet, Fraser, Troy and a couple others could be stronger than their scores indicate," Dwyer said. "We want to be on our toes for that."

The Raiders were 11th in the state last year — a fine accomplishment for any team — but they remember being second just two years ago. If everything goes well Saturday, the Raiders would like to regain their former status the following week at Troy High School.

"BEING THAT we're ranked sixth in the state, that would be gratifying if we could move up a couple notches," Dwyer said.

It won't be easy for aspiring teams to beat out either Athens or North for the top two places since both have a strong contingent of all-rounders.

The Raiders have qualified at

gymnastics

least five girls in every event: Heather Kahn, Kim Heller, Rita Dunn, Kristin Szutarski and Jameelah Gater. In addition, Elton Wesselman is entered in every event but floor exercise. That gives North an advantage over teams that haven't qualified as many individuals.

"It'll be pretty much like the regular season," Dwyer said. "We can have six in nearly every event and count four scores. If one bombs out, we still have four good ones. The odds are we're going to score better."

If the Raiders remain true to form, it should be Heller and Kahn leading them to whatever success they might have. They tied for second place among WLAA all-rounders last week.

"I expect Kim Heller and Heather Kahn to place high at this regional meet," Dwyer said. "Kahn has been real consistent all year, and Heller has just been getting better all along. She hasn't peaked yet. She can score better than she has in recent meets."

Dwyer added Dunn has been posting high scores recently on the beam, her best event, and Szutarski has been having the same success on bars and vault.

Farmington Hills Harrison and Farmington will be at the GPS regional, too, while Livonia Clarence-Clare will be at the GPS regional.

Please turn to Page 4



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Jameelah Gater of North Farmington is one of five all-around gymnasts who will compete for the Raiders in the regional Saturday. Competition begins at noon at Grasse Pointe South High School.

Qualifying list has youthful appearance

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

The objective for area swim teams is to do as well as possible in state meet competition this weekend.

But if some goals go unfulfilled, there's always next year for some of those competing for North Farmington, Farmington Hills Harrison and Redford Catholic Central.

The majority of the swimmers who qualified from these schools are underclassmen. In their quest for immediate rewards, they will have an eye toward the future at the same time.

The preliminaries will be Friday and Saturday. The Class A meet will take place at Michigan State University in East Lansing, the B-C-D event at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Competition begins at 2 p.m. each day. Tickets are \$3 Friday and \$4 Saturday.

North Farmington has Steve Tumey, its lone senior qualifier, and Dan Knipper entered in the 100-yard breaststroke. Both will compete in the 400 freestyle relay along with Jerry Jehle and Chuck Chuba.

"DAN IS ONLY a junior, and we have three juniors on the relay," North coach Sue Gendron said. "So it's looking good for next year."

"It's been a long season, and they hope to finish with a bang, a good note, so they can feel good about their accomplishments."

Harrison, which placed 10th in Class B last year, will take its 200 medley relay to the state meet, as well as swimmers in two individual events.

Ed Serzo qualified for the backstroke, Jason Barringer the

swimming

breaststroke. Each will swim those events in the medley relay, combining with Chad Hughes (butterfly) and Jeff Nelkirk (freestyle) to comprise the foursome.

"It will be a good learning experience," Harrison coach Peter Leonhardt said, adding his young team made a lot of progress this year.

"Going into this year, I wasn't sure if we were going to have anybody going to state, but the guys came through and did a nice job. They came a long way this year and will even stronger next year."

LEONHARDT, AS with Gendron, certainly isn't writing off the possibility of success at this year's state meet. Leonhardt, in fact, is confident the Hawks can be among the top 12 in the medley relay.

"If we can go 1:44, we might have a chance to make the consolation, and I think we can go 1:44," he said. "If either Serzo or Barringer drops a little bit, they certainly have a chance."

"We're not going there just to show up," he added. "Score is what we intend to do."

North divers Rob Kunzelman and John Juliano and Harrison's Ryan Koonce and Carl Johnson were to compete in regional meets Tuesday to determine if they qualify for the state meet. Johnson finished 10th in Class B last year as a freshman.

CC sophomores Troy Shumate and

Please turn to Page 5

Vikings deliver knockout to Raiders in district final

By Dan O'Meara
staff writer

North Farmington experienced the emotional peak and valleys that result from competition Saturday in the district volleyball tournament at Millford Lakeland High School.

Unfortunately for the Raiders, the day ended in disappointment as North lost to Western Lakes Activities Association rival Walled Lake Central in the championship match, 12-15, 9-15.

That season-ending defeat was preceded by North's biggest victory of the year. In the semifinals, the Raiders knocked off unbeaten Brighton in three games, 9-15, 15-8, 15-11.

After eliminating Walled Lake Western 15-13, 15-4 in its opening match, North had to fight an uphill battle against the Kensington Valley Conference champions and was successful.

volleyball

"It was a long, tough match, and I think it took a lot out of our kids," North coach Sandy Lubieniecki said. "But they were thrilled. They knew they had gone toe-to-toe with a very good team."

COURTNEY KNAPP, a junior who set five single-season records, led the attack with 10 kills and 23 spikes out of 24 attempts in the semifinal. Vikki Seamons was 19-of-20 hitting and had seven kills against Brighton.

"We made fantastic defensive plays," Lubieniecki said, "which has been our strength all season, being shorter than most teams. We made

saves on balls you just couldn't believe, and we were able to attack when we had the chance."

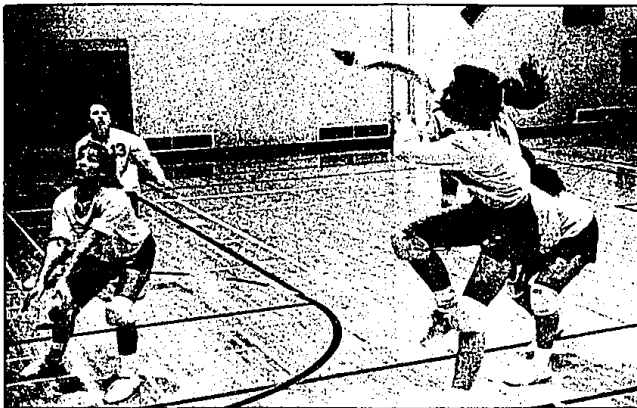
Kelly Coulson was 20-for-20 serving with seven aces and 12 points, and Debbie Weintraub was 14-for-14 and had eight points. She also had 27 assists as the setter. In addition, Coulson set a season record for most good serves, putting 473 out of 499 chances into play.

"Being in the first serving spot, she gets more opportunities, but that's why she was picked for that," Lubieniecki said.

After the highly emotional win over the Lady Bulldogs, North had a rocky start in the final. The Raiders, champions of the Lakes Division, and Central split their two-match series in the regular season.

North fell behind 10-1 in the first game, but the Raiders rallied to take

Please turn to Page 4



ART EMANUELE/staff photographer

Andrea Velthoven goes on the attack for Farmington Hills Mercy in the district tournament Saturday. The Marlins lost a three-game match

to Detroit Henry Ford in the first round. See story on Page 4D.

NCAA DIVISION II WOMEN'S GREAT LAKES CHAMPIONSHIP

LEPLEY SPORTS CENTER, OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

Friday, March 10, 6:00 p.m. —
 Northern Michigan 24 and 3 vs. St. Joseph's (Indiana) 25 and 3
 8:00 p.m. — Oakland University 25 and 3 vs. Northern Kentucky 21 and 6

Saturday, March 11, 7:00 p.m.
 Championship Game

\$4.00 - General Admission \$3.00 - Students (with I.D.)